

A Proper Exit Strategy

3-Year Bible Reading Plan

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Today as we go to 2 Chronicles 1, I want to address how to have a proper exit strategy, and you and I today are on the forefront, the beginning days, the early stages of walking through a territory that very few people in the existence of planet earth have done, we're walking through a global pandemic. What makes it even very different for you and I today is we're doing so while connected by way of technology and media; we're able to communicate long distances even if we need to stay a distance apart.

I want to talk about how do you and I row out of this global pandemic. Now we don't know how long it will be, it might be a few weeks, it might be a couple months, none of us knows but rest assured there is going to come a day where we no longer work from home, there's going to come a day where the ball fields are busy with athletes again, there's gonna come a day where we gather in the pews of local churches such as this, the day is coming we will exit this current state of affairs and today I want to address a proper exit strategy. You may be wondering why would we deal with this on the front end? Allow me to give you two very simple illustrations. If you've had the privilege yourself or at least watching someone who is proficient in driving very fast automobiles, a race car driver, any track that you've observed that possesses a turn whether it's an oval track or it's a road track with many turns, one of the things you'll notice about those who are proficient in high speed driving is that when they enter the turn, they look to the exit of the turn because where their eyes are coming out of the turn will determine how they drive through the turn, and today I want to challenge you from God's word to have your eyes set on the exit of the global pandemic even as we're just now entering into the proverbial turn of our lives.

On a more serious note, there are those whom the Lord has called and we as a church support by the thousands on what we know as the mission field, many times people are called to what we call an unreached people group. They've never heard the name of Jesus Christ, they've never seen a copy of what hopefully you have in your possession right now, a copy of the Scriptures of the Bible, and those missionaries when they step foot on the ground for the very first time actually have an exit strategy. How will they remove themselves from the culture when the Gospel becomes indigenous? Now I know that's kind of a big, long, theological word but what it really means is this: when the people that were formerly unreached are reaching themselves without the necessary influence of an

outside culture or individual. So when a missionary steps on the ground for the very first time, they're automatically beginning to process and think, "How will I leave this place?" When a race car driver enters a turn, he's actually thinking or she is actually thinking, "How will I exit it?" You and I today are on the front side of a global pandemic and I want to go to the word of God and see how should you and I exit it in a few weeks, months or however long they deem it necessary.

Now I want to begin today at the finish line. In fact, I want to go into 2 Chronicles 1 and I want us to see the exit as it is played out. We're going to spend the majority of our time today actually back at the end of 1 Chronicles in the life of David, but I want you to see what happened in Solomon's life. This is the finish line. This is everything that David was praying for and preparing for. Beginning in verse 3 of chapter 1, it says,

3 So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness. 4 But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjathjearim to the place which David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.

Now a couple of things I want you to notice about those two verses and the first one is this: do you notice the attitude that Solomon possessed, that he was willing, he was desirous, he gathered those around him and said, "Let's go and worship the one true God." It is my hope, hopefully it is your desire that as we row out of the global pandemic, that our desire for the things of God, our desire for the words of God, our desire to spend time with God is actually greater as we exit than when we entered.

I want you to notice, though, verse 4, it says, "But the ark of God." That which would be so critical in the dedication of the temple, that which we'll study in just a moment that David longed to see have a place of permanence was not with them. In other words, the worship of Solomon in 2 Chronicles 1 looks a little different than in other places. Why is that important for you and I? Well, we know that worship looks very different today. You're in your living room or dining room rather than being occupying these pews, I'm in an empty room rather than a full room, but probably the most frequent question that is being asked of me as of late both by individuals and even in somewhat larger settings is people are asking, "What is the church, what are we going to look like in a few weeks or months when this all comes to a close?" You know, there's really two schools of thought. There's what we might call the glass half full, the positive, that believe that because humanity desires interaction, because we crave to join with each other not just in fellowship but in singing and studying together, that what we know as the physical structure of the church will once again have large gatherings not like we used to but even larger than, those that what we might call church attendance had become nominal or taken for granted will now be a fervency in their life. The other side of the argument is kind of the glass half empty side. There are those that believe that because of the comfort of your living room or the flexibility of driving around in a car listening to the radio, that one will just stay in that comfort and not return. I don't know what the answer is and only

time will tell, but I don't want to address the "finish line" based on how many people gather at a certain place at a certain time, I want to focus on Solomon's attitude, his approach toward. He actually desired to spend time with God. He wanted to go and to worship God and that should be our finish line. As we look weeks and possibly even months down the line, can we establish for ourselves that our finish line is desiring the person, the things, and the word of God more when this is over than when it began?

Now the question is: so what will that look like? Many of you are familiar with Solomon's famous conversation with the Lord. While he was in that worship service, the Lord said, "You can have anything in the world, just name it and claim it." He didn't ask for riches, as we'll read in a moment. He didn't ask for great fame. He asked for wisdom which simply means according to James 1, he wanted to know how to make decisions and how to live life not according to man's opinion but according to what God had spoken.

I want to pick up the story in verse 11 and 12 of 2 Chronicles 1. It says,

11 And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: 12 Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.

You know, it's interesting that all the things that we would naturally and in our flesh desire Solomon actually received in an abundance, but they were actually the residual effect of simply desiring to have a more passionate relationship with the Lord.

You know, as we look at these verses and we talk about an exit strategy, as we talk about a finish line, none of us knows what the next few days, weeks or months are going to present, but can I share with you what the word of God says? In Philippians 1:6 it says, "He that began a good work in you will continue it until the time of Christ Jesus." Jeremiah 29:11 says, "I know the plans I have for you, saith the Lord, a plan to prosper you, not to harm you or hurt you." Rest assured that even though we're in the midst of very uncertain days that have not been traversed such as these, that the Lord is well aware not only of what's happening but the concerns of our heart and the issues that we're dealing with, and here is where I want to go this morning, Ephesians 3:20, it says, "Unto him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly more than we could ever ask or think." Would that not be the cry of your heart today? Would that not be what you would desire more than anything whether that's for your health, your finances, your family? In the next weeks and months as we begin to row out of this global pandemic, isn't your desire that God would do abundantly more than even what you're personally seeking and desiring?

You know, I purposely left off the last phrase of verse 20 of Ephesians 3, it says "according to the Spirit that dwells within us." I want you to hear me very clearly this

morning, I believe the Lord has incredible plans for your life and for mine, and even though our context today looks very different, if you and I will approach this situation as we see David in just a moment, rest assured we can come on the backside with a greater passion for the things of God, and we may just, in fact, though it may not look the way we would script it out, the blessings of God could be abundantly greater than even you and I could think, imagine or speak.

Well, that's kind of the finish line of where we're headed so the next obvious question is: how do we get there? So I'm gonna encourage you to take a step back just a few pages into chapter 28 of 1 Chronicles, again the transition from David to Solomon, very different than from Saul to David. There was not an abrupt death and a quick passing of the crown, there was a preparation that took place and I kinda wanna walk you through three things that were present in David's life that led to the finish line that I believe can be present in each and every one of our lives.

The first one is the fact that David was a man of faith. He was faithful. In fact, if you look in verse 11 and 12 of chapter 28 of 1 Chronicles it says,

11 Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, 12 And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things:

And you may question how does that demonstrate that he was a man of faithfulness? You see, the thing that David longed for more than anything else is just a permanent place for what you and I know as the ark of the covenant. No longer to be subject to the nomadic lifestyle of the tabernacle, the tent. No longer being out in the rain and the elements. No longer captured by the Philistines or the enemies. But a place that was not only opulent in appearance but protective when it came to its presence, and yet the Lord made it clear earlier not just in this chapter but in others, that that was not his calling of life, he was a man of war, but it would be Solomon's. You see, that which he desired more than anything would not be manifested in his own life but it would be in his own lineage.

You see, when we talk about being a person of faith or one who is found faithful, we can go to all the dictionary definitions but I think Hebrews 11:1 states it best, that faith "is the substance of things hoped for, it is the evidence of things not seen." Now think about that, substance and evidence. It's tangible. It can be felt. It can be seen. In some cases, it can even be heard. But our faith is that which is real comes out of our hope and that which is not seen as of yet. Right now hope is really all we have as we're walking through these days, and let me remind you of what 1 Peter 3:15 says, "Always be prepared to give an answer for the hope that is within us."

You know, as we walk through these uncertain days, the only people who truly have hope are those that are believers in Jesus Christ. Not just hope for the hereafter but hope for the here and now. And what does it say? It's the evidence of things not seen. None of us knows what life's gonna look like on the other side. We don't know what the workplace is gonna look like. We don't know what school is gonna look like. We don't even know what the gathering of believers at what we formerly called church will look like, but we do know that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, and so that faith that we possess, much like David's, was that which God had begun, is going to continue. Jesus Christ, his identity and his presence in our life has not changed just because we're walking through a global pandemic.

But I want you to see the actions that David put to his faith. Notice in verse 12 it was the pattern of all; that he actually gave Solomon what you and I would call the blueprints. That which God had begun, he is going to continue. On this side, David's side, we can imagine what it is. On the other side, Solomon's side, we'll actually be able to touch it and to feel it. And when we talk about putting our faith into action or actually living it out, there are a lot of illustrations and such, but I want to give you one today from many years ago in my life. In fact, it was a long time ago Tracy and I had the privilege of pastoring a small, little, what we would call country church in rural Texas. It was in a community that wasn't very large but the church itself was actually several miles outside of the small community. The church door was 42 miles from Tracy and I's little duplex there in Waco, Texas. It took 42 miles to get there, 42 miles to get back.

One Sunday afternoon, I had returned back home for lunchtime and had dropped Tracy off and was making my way back to what we call the church house, and it would be our Sunday evening Bible study. There would be very few gathered as I was used to. But a couple of miles outside of where the church was located, I noticed that something was different up ahead. The highway, and by the way if you've ever traveled those roads out in what we would call central or west Texas, they all pretty much look the same, they're flat, they're brown and they're hot, and it was in the middle of the summer and it was every one of those. As I began to get closer and closer, I noticed that there was a large, shall we say, plume of smoke ahead of me, a great number of emergency vehicles and personnel standing out their vehicles. The road was blocked because obviously a brushfire had commenced. I made my way to the law enforcement personnel and began to engage in a conversation through the window of the car, and he shared with me that a brushfire had indeed begun, but that because of the winds and the heat and the dryness, had jumped the highway and actually gone to the other side. Both sides of the highway were engulfed in fire. The visibility, at least from where I was, was about 50 maybe 75 feet. I mean, it was thick. You could hear the sounds of the fire but it was really the smoke that was really what you saw and could smell the most.

As I conversed with him, he made it clear that I was gonna have to find an alternate route. I shared with him that I was a pastor of a local church and because of the ruralness of the church, there wasn't an alternate route that wouldn't have taken an enormous amount of time and I wouldn't even make it on time, I wouldn't even make it at all as far as the worship hour was concerned. He kind of looked at me peculiarly and he said, "Son," he

said, "if you'll do exactly what I tell you to do, you can get to church on time." I said, "Sir, what is that?" He said, "The length of this fire is not as big as you may think it is. It's really not even quite a mile, it's really more like half a mile." He said, "If you will drive through it the way I tell you to, you can make it to the other side." I said, "Sir, you want me to actually drive through this?" He said, "But you have to do what I tell you to." He said, "First, do not be tempted to turn. Don't get off the road and don't turn back around. In fact, don't even stay in a lane, I want you to straddle the lines in the middle. Go right down the center of the road." He said, "The second thing is this: do not be tempted to put the brakes on. Once you engage the gas, you have got to be committed to drive all the way through."

Honestly, I couldn't believe he was going to allow me to do it. In today's world, they may not allow me to do so, but that day he wished me well and I began to drive and it was a drive like none other. It's one of those things where you know if you've ever been in a tense moment in life where time kind of slows down and probably wouldn't last maybe 60-90 seconds, feels like it's 60-90 minutes. I still remember the smoke engulfing me on all sides. I can still remember hearing the sound of the fire. But I also remember the instructions: don't turn, don't stop. It wasn't near as long as it felt but when I came on the backside, it was as clear as day again.

That story in my life serves as an illustration for what we're all walking through today. You've been asking the question, "How much longer?" Your children are asking the question, "How much longer?" I'm asking but one day we will exit from our current state of affairs and years down the road we're gonna look back and say it really wasn't that long. But being a person of faith says I'm not gonna veer to the right, I'm not gonna veer to the left, I'm just gonna take the course that the Lord gave me and I'm gonna drive through it for the entirety of this experience.

That's what David exemplified. He brought the plans, he brought the blueprints, he said, "Solomon, don't veer from what God has given us and don't be tempted to stop, just continue what God was already doing before this change." David was a man of faith. I'm gonna encourage us to be people of faith. I also want to encourage us to possess fidelity. Now you hear the word fidelity and you think, "Well, isn't that a synonym of faith?" Well, kinda, sorta, not really. You cannot have fidelity apart from faith but fidelity is continuing to walk in faith. By definition it means not turning to the right, not turning to the left, not stopping. It means continuing when you don't want to and continuing even when you want to give up.

There are gonna be days, maybe today, that you're wondering does God really know what he's doing? There's gonna be days where you tempted to say, "Should I stay true to the things of God or should I just listen to what the world is telling me?" I want you to see later in this chapter in verse 20 what happens in the life of David that prepared Solomon for the finish line that we saw earlier. It says,

20 And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage,
and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God,

will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.

Now I want you to think what that attitude of fidelity is. He says be strong, be courageous, don't fear, don't be dismayed. Isn't that what we're hearing from every angle today? It doesn't matter if we talk to a source of faith or a source of the secular world, everybody's telling us we need to be strong, we need to be courageous, don't need to fear and don't be dismayed, but can we be honest with each other today? As I'm in your living room or in your kitchen or in your car, I would say that at times those emotions creep up, do they not? There's been times in days past or maybe even today that fear has somewhat sunk in, or maybe you're a little bit dismayed, maybe you don't feel very strong, maybe you don't feel courageous, well, fidelity is an extension of our faith, it's being strong when we feel weak, it's being courageous when we want to be a coward, it's being fearless when we hear words of fear. And so ultimately the big question is it sounds great but how do I do this? How do I walk that journey? How do I become a person of courageous behavior?

You know, earlier I mentioned going back to Joshua 1, I would encourage you to turn back to that portion in your Bible and I want to talk you to a place where what we just read was first spoken, this idea of being strong and courageous and not having fear was nothing new that the Lord had spoken to his people, but he spoke it to them here in Joshua 1 as they were about to do something they had never done before, they were about to enter what you and I call the Promised Land. They had come out of Egypt, they'd come through the wilderness, in fact, if you turn a few pages to the right in chapter 3, verse 4, the Lord tells Joshua to tell the people, "Do not worry. Nobody has ever done this before. You're doing something brand new." Is that not the world we're living in today? I cannot tell you how many conversations I've had with those who are significantly more mature than I am and they've said, "I've never seen days such as this," but it didn't change the message. Notice what it says in verse 6 of chapter 1,

6 Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. 7 Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. 8 This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9 Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

It's the same marching orders that David is given. It's the same marching orders that you and I are given. The reason I had you turn back is we see it a little bit more in specific. How does this happen? We have to take the word of God not just seriously in word but in

life. It said meditate day and night. You and I are subject today to a lot of information that is fearful, a lot of information that causes us to become weak and without strength. Can I tell you what the antidote is to all that we're hearing on the airwaves? The word of God. And while we're just being very transparent, I mean, after all, I'm sitting in your living room, so to speak, right now, there are times where I've listened so much and read so much news that I sense fear creeping in, I sense being dismayed, I sense a lack of courage, but the more time I spend in the word of God whether it's 2 Chronicles or 2 Corinthians, do you know what begins to happen? Strength begins to build up. Fearlessness begins to return into my life, and courage ensues.

So I don't want you to turn off what we call the news, but can I give you a challenge to spend as much time listening to what God says about life as what the pundits do. Sure, we need to know what's happening and what the advice is that's happening as we walk down this road, but if you're sensing a lack of courage, if you're sensing a lack of strength, let me challenge you to do what they did going in the Promised Land and what they did as they prepared for the building of the temple, they meditated and spent time in the word of God.

So if we desire that finish line that Solomon realized, we've gotta be faithful, we've gotta possess fidelity, but last but not least we've got to have focus. I want you to notice what happens in chapter 29 back in 1 Chronicles. David is about to give at least in this section, the last what we might call marching orders. He says,

1 Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great: for the palace is not for man, but for the LORD God. 2 Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistering stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance.

It sounds like an interesting honey-do list, does it not, what should be gathered for this process. But I want you to see his focus. Even in the midst of all the silver and the gold, even in the midst of the onyx stones and the precious stones, what does he tell Solomon? What is he telling us? This is not about man, it's about God.

You know, there's a lot of people today saying that the church is closed. The church isn't closed because the church isn't about a building, the church is about those who are believers in Jesus Christ and I think we're more open today than we may have ever been. I'll address that in just a moment. But the thing I want you to see is it wasn't about man, it was about God, and so as we prepare to exit, no matter how long that may be, if we just have faith and hope that God is going to do what he promised in our lives, if we possess fidelity just to continue walking in the truth of God's word no matter how long this journey lasts, and if we'll stay focused that it's not about what we want or what we desire

but what would honor God, you and I will have the privilege of seeing what we see in the next chapter when God blesses Solomon not just with wisdom, with an abundance of other things as well.

So what he said simply was it's not about me, it's about you, God. What's interesting is how he put that into action. Notice it says in verse 2, "I have prepared with all of my might," and there is a list of gold and silver and a whole lot of valuable items. You say, "Well, David was a wealthy man and he was able to contribute greatly." Well, I'm gonna encourage you to fast forward a few verses to verse 6. It says, "Then the chief of the fathers." Let me push pause there for a moment: that's you and that's me. Those are your everyday run-of-the-mill Israelites doing their best to provide for their families and for their community.

6 Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king's work, offered willingly, 7 And gave for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. 8 And they with whom precious stones were found gave them to the treasure of the house of the LORD, by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite.

Listen to verse 9,

9 Then the people [not just the king, not just the chief princes] Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.

Today as you and I look to how are we gonna exit this global pandemic as people of faith stronger on the other side than we are on this side, we need to be faithful, we need to possess fidelity, we need to focus not just on what we're hearing from man but on the things of God. But what happened here? They gave willingly with a perfect heart. What was it they gained? What is it that you and I in these days of very much uncertainty, what can we and how can we give? Well, one thing that we can give is what I mentioned earlier, is hope. The number of conversations that I've had verbally as well as through what we might call technology has somewhat increased in recent days. People are looking for hope, desiring hope. Something else I've noticed at least in our community, that even though we socially distance now, as you drive through neighborhoods, particularly in the evening when we're used to going to events and sporting events and such, that people are out in their yards respectively talking with one another, conversing with one another. As you go to the store, even though we may keep a certain distance from each other, in days past we would just go get the item, check out and leave with as little conversation as possible, and now people are seeking to engage each other. One of the things that you and I can give willingly out of a perfect heart is we're able to give hope and we're able to communicate the truth of what we studied this morning and what

we're continuing to do as a family of faith, give hope that this too will pass and that God desires to move mightily in our lives; that Jesus is still in the saving business and he still desires to move in our lives. We can give that message now and it's actually people are wanting to hear it.

But the second thing was very tangible, they gave of their resources. Why is that important? Because it's at times like this where that may be the toughest thing to do. In fact, one of the things that we're doing as a culture is we're kind of restricting our access to other people. We're restricting a means of employment and financial currency and such. But that's not what the Israelites did. That's not what David did. In fact, what I would encourage you as a person of faith is rather than restricting your conversations, increase them. Rather than restricting your distance, though you need to keep a certain amount of distance physically, don't restrict the opportunity to reach out. I've heard as of late that people are making phone calls more frequently than they used to, maybe texting their friends, their neighbors, their Sunday school members just to check on them when in days past we'd just wait until next Sunday and we'll see them. Now people are making phone calls and checking, that's what it means to give of your time but also of the treasure. You know, we're being told today to hoard. That's what we're seeing in our world as people go shopping. We actually have signs up telling us to limit ourselves to how much we can take. These are not the times to hoard, these are actually the times to be generous.

You know, we're being told supposedly, and again it's not coming from me, that there is a stimulus package that is coming from Washington. I've got news for you, it's not coming from Washington because the Lord makes it clear that he owns it all, we're simply stewards. We have the privilege of managing that which he allows us to have access to and I want to share with you, we don't know if or when or how much this may be, but I've already made the decision, I've already spoken with my family that we're gonna do with those resources the same thing we do with every dollar that we receive, we give to the Lord. Why? Because when you give, you're telling the Lord, "I trust you more than I trust myself. I trust you more than I trust the experts out there or whoever it may be." And can I encourage you as people of faith who exercise fidelity and focus, trust the Lord with those conversations wherever you may have them and trust the Lord with your finances.

You see, what we see David did is he prepared for Solomon and he gave so that on the other side, that which the ark of the covenant had was far greater than before. Nobody would ever want the tabernacle when you could have the temple. Speaking of that, when we look at this passage of Scripture, it's all about how we prepare for the days ahead, the next stage, the next step. We don't know when we'll be able to have a lack of restrictions in our culture, but I do know this, every single one of us at some point in our lives is going to exit not just a global pandemic, we're going to exit this life. We don't know if it's weeks, months, years or decades, but we will, and maybe you're one of those individuals today as you look at the faith that David possessed, you look at the fervency that Solomon eventually had, maybe you think to yourself, "You know, I've spent so much time focusing on the things of this world, I've never really thought about the hereafter." You know, it's interesting when you spend all day listening to the reports of the infected

and some ultimate demise, it makes you think about what happens when you exit planet earth, and maybe today you're one of those individuals that you don't know what that looks like, you don't know if you're ready, you don't know if you're prepared, you don't know if you've done what's necessary to exit properly. Well, I quoted John 3:16 earlier in the service but Romans 10 says whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Why would you call on the name of the Lord? Because you recognize you've sinned, you've done things you shouldn't have done, said things you shouldn't have said, and thought things you shouldn't have thought. Why would you call on the Lord? Because you believe that Jesus Christ is the only answer to your sin problem.

Maybe today you're that person sitting in your living room, maybe you're on the back porch, maybe you're driving around and need to pull off on the shoulder, maybe it's right now or maybe it's later today, maybe you need to have that conversation with the Lord. It's pretty simple. You don't have to be worried, "Do I say it just like Jeff did?" Say it in your own words but maybe your conversation would go a little something like this. "God, today I recognize that I have sinned, I've messed up and I'm the problem. I believe that Jesus Christ is the only answer to my sin problem. God, I believe that Jesus was born for me, I believe he lived for me, I believe he died for me, I believe he rose from the dead for me, and because he raised from the dead, God, I know that my sins can be forgiven and my soul can be saved. God, I don't have all the answers to the problems particularly that are going on in the world today, but I do know that Jesus Christ is the only answer to my sin problem. So in the best way I know how, I'm asking you to forgive me, I'm asking you to save me. I just want to turn my life over to you."

Hopefully today you're that person who for the very first time had that conversation with the Lord. We'd love to hear from you and whether you make a comment on a live stream thread or whether you reach out by phone or by email from the website, please make contact with us. We'd love to talk with you about what that means to be a believer in Jesus Christ and what are the next steps. Speaking of the next steps, I mentioned the church is as open as it has ever been. The offices are not closed, our ministers are still available to you. We may not be gathering in large crowds but we want you to know that we are here for you.